

DRIVING MISS DAISY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Kindness, Friendship

Language: a handful of mild profanities and one improper use of God's name: Consider TV Guardian

Background: This movie won 4 Oscars, including Best Picture of 1989

- What kind of serious issues does this movie address? *Aging, human rights of the elderly, racial prejudice, faith, social status, Civil Rights*
- What aging issues did this film make you aware of? *Driving impairment, losing their independence, loss of "filter" (saying what you think w/o thinking if it is the right thing to say),*
- "What would you consider to be the main point of the story?" "Do you agree or disagree with that point?" How we treat each other, regardless of political, social, economic, ethnic, religious or age of the individual. Miss Daisy and Hoke change as individuals and they change each other. Hoke learns to assert his self-worth and dignity while Miss Daisy learns that it's safe to rely on someone other than herself and to depend on friends and family.
- Like this movie, geographical region (Southern states), historical era (Civil Rights movement) and moral upbringing can contribute to our beliefs and influence our perception of prejudice and preferential treatment. Why is that? New people, places, and behaviors can threaten our sense of security and feelings of safety and belonging. As a product of her environment, Miss Daisy may have blindly exercised racial and class discrimination.
- In what ways might Miss Daisy feared prejudice and preferential treatment? Her social status, her physical and social fragility due to her age, and her Jewish faith
- At this time and place in history, intensified forms of politeness and courtesy were the everyday, external signs of a person's moral character. Give some examples of the manners and social graces that measured a person's moral character. Prefixing "Miss" or "Master" to a first name, exemplifying correct posture and tea etiquette, coursey/bowing, and the colors of one's dress
- When Hoke admits he can't find the other grave because he can't read, Daisy reverts back to her teacher-role by giving Hoke a lesson in phonetics. What does Miss Daisy's act of kindness do for Hoke? Hoke begins to read and gains the confidence and self-respect that is derived from learning a new and vital skill.

- What happened to Hoke when he realized that he could go on no longer without taking care of his physical need to relieve himself first? Hoke stood up for himself, refusing to put up with Daisy's unreasonable demands. What lesson can be learned from this? A caregiver HAS to take care of their own needs or they could end up needing care themselves!
- There was a transformative moment for Miss Daisy when Hoke left her in the car at night while he went to relieve himself. What did Miss Daisy realize? She felt unsafe, lost and helpless. She realized how dependent she had become on Hoke and how she had taken him for granted.
- In her later years, Miss Daisy shows signs of dementia. She becomes confused, thinking that she is still a schoolteacher. What is Hoke's strategy for dealing with her confusion? There is a role reversal where Hoke becomes the teacher by instructing Miss Daisy to gain self-control while guiding her back to reality.
- In later years, Daisy reveals her wishes to not become a burden to her son, Boolie and her employee, Hoke. Eventually, Boolie decides to place Miss Daisy in a nursing home. What are the wishes of your parents?
- In the nursing home when Hoke is feeding Miss Daisy her Thanksgiving pumpkin pie because she can no longer feed herself...any thoughts?
- As Hoke ages, he, too, deals with the loss of independence when he can no longer drive and must depend on his granddaughter to chauffeur. Was this easy for Hoke? "...I doan' drive now. ...It hard, not drivin'. Dat plan ain' on no bus line.
- "Which character did you admire most? Why?"
- "What character is most like you? How?"
 - *Miss Daisy: proud, paranoid, crotchety*
 - *Mr. Hoke: stubborn in his commitment to serve with a sunny disposition,*
- "How do the morals onscreen compare with the values you've been learning at home, school or church?"
- What type of character develops because of Mr. Hoke's kindness? *Trust, then respect, then friendship*
- "What might happen if you imitated the choices or behaviors of the people in this movie?"

- BIBLE EXERCISE:
 - What Scripture passages or verses come to mind with this story?
 - In your concordance, look up FRIENDSHIP or KINDNESS. How many references are there to it?
- Do you agree/disagree with this statement?
- Life lesson: As all of us age, we too will lose some of our independence. Like Miss Daisy and Hoke, we will need to depend on the aid of family, friends, healthcare workers to ensure that our quality of life is maintained.
- ACTION:
 - Who can you/your family chauffeur?
 - Who can you/your family visit/feed in a nursing home?

For a more complete educational guide, go to <http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/kburrows/files/1.692.pdf>